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LETTER DATED 11 APRIL 1996 FROM THE CHARGE D'AFFAIRES A.I. OF THE PERMANENT MISSION OF THE FORMER YUGOSLAV REPUBLIC OF MACEDONIA TO THE UNITED NATIONS ADDRESSED TO THE SECRETARY-GENERAL

Please find enclosed the letter signed by H.E. Dr. Ljubomir Frckovski, Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Macedonia, dated 8 April 1996, concerning the UNPREDEP mission in the Republic of Macedonia.

I should be grateful if the text of the present letter and its annex could be issued as a document of the Security Council.

(Signed) Slobodan TASOVSKI
Deputy Permanent Representative

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Annex

Letter dated 8 April 1996 from the Minister for Foreign Affairs of the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia addressed to the Secretary-General

First of all allow me to express my satisfaction with the definite establishment of UNPREDEP as a fully independent peace-keeping mission in the Republic of Macedonia, headed by Mr. Henryk Sokalski, Your Excellency's Special Representative.

Highly appreciating Your Excellency's involvement ever since the very start of this extraordinarily successful preventive peace-keeping operation of the United Nations in the Republic of Macedonia, I rest convinced that you will stipulate the continuation of its mandate for another 12 months in your forthcoming report to the Security Council.

I believe that the unambiguously positive assessment by the Security Council and by numerous factors of the international community, expressed thus far with regard to the successful realization of the UNPREDEP peace-keeping mission, indeed represents solid grounds for the continuation of its mandate.

I am sure you will share my opinion that, unfortunately, the situation in the region has not changed to the extent that would warrant the completion of the mission by 30 May of this year. Permit me to recall a few well-known facts and assessments in confirmation of the foregoing:

- It cannot be doubted that the Dayton Agreement has represented a success in ceasing war conflicts, first and foremost in Bosnia and Herzegovina. However, this period of full implementation of the Agreement shall be definitely sensitive and shall be exposed to risks and complications. UNPREDEP, as a proven factor of stability, is of tremendous importance in support of the peace processes within the area of the crisis and wider, having in mind its complexity and the intricacy of the ethnic and religious composition of the region.

- The potential threats for the Republic of Macedonia imposed by the expansion of the crisis have not been overcome yet, bearing also in mind the issue of Kosovo, in our immediate neighbourhood. Tensions and the possible complications are still present in the very area of UNPREDEP's operation. The northern border of the Republic of Macedonia is still not mutually demarcated, despite the efforts of my Government in this regard.

- The Republic of Macedonia, not by its own fault, has remained with a significantly reduced defensive capability. This is the consequence of the withdrawal of all armament and military equipment following the departure of the former Yugoslav People's Army from our State, as well as the result of the Security Council arms embargo. The establishment of an appropriate defence system incorporated in collective security arrangements (NATO) and the definite formulation of a defence policy based on the principles of civil control of military forces and on a democratic political system are our permanent commitment. Our difficult economic situation which to a large extent has been

affected by United Nations sanctions and the unilateral embargo of the recent past, shall take a longer time in order to establish an adequate defence system. The continuation of UNPREDEP's mandate in the Republic of Macedonia is also important because of the concern of the United Nations and the international community at large with the establishment of an environment favourable to strengthening the stability of a country that has proven itself an important factor of peace and stability in the region.

- The Republic of Macedonia is a country with ethnic and religious diversity. As such it has proven its ability to develop as a stable democratic State, an equal partner in the international community, full-fledged member of most important international and regional organizations, such as the United Nations, OSCE and the Council of Europe. The Mission of UNPREDEP, which in coordination with OSCE, has established an exceptional cooperation with all the important entities in our country, has greatly contributed to the process of establishing democratic structures in the Republic of Macedonia and to the realization of its policy of good-neighbourliness. In this regard, UNPREDEP strengthens the reputation and influence of both the United Nations and the international community among the broad public with regard to the observance of the principles enshrined in the Charter of the United Nations and the international standards for human rights in a specific situation.

I shall be grateful to Your Excellency for making this letter available to the members of the Security Council.

(Signed) Ljubomir FRCKOVSKI
Minister